



# PUNCH

Or

*The London Charivari*



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July 1 1942

## Charivaria

It appears that General ADOLF HUEHNLEIN, Herr HITLER's transport chief, has achieved something of a Nazi record by dying a natural death in Munich.

The other day a Surrey man celebrated his hundredth birthday. His claim to be the youngest centenarian in the district is still unchallenged.

We hear that an exclusive London restaurant seeks powers to impose an additional house-charge if unknown austerity diners call the head waiter by his first name.

A soldier home after two years in the Middle East says that in some ways conditions on the desert are similar to those prevailing in this country. He noticed this particularly when he turned into the saloon bar of a mirage and found there was no beer.



There was another sensational end to a fight recently. A spectator knocked his opponent into the ring.

"The wild birds seem to appreciate the absence of railings in the London parks," says a nature-lover. Well, for one thing, they don't get paint on their feet in the spring.

"The Fuehrer is ageing," says a neutral correspondent. This, in our opinion, is a pity.

One astrologer no longer contributes his column to a newspaper. This was revealed to him, we understand, in a letter from the Editor.



A new synthetic beverage in Germany is said by people who have tried it to smell and taste exactly like coffee. This is a great tribute to their memories.

A New York man had a fish-bone stuck in his throat for a fortnight before he would go to a doctor and have it removed. Americans are not yet so salvage-conscious as we are.

The lights of a London club recently failed for an hour. When it became known that this was due to an electrical defect and not economy it was noticed that some of the older members grew quite luminous.

On his way back from an attack one of the crew of a British bomber composed a poem on the raid. We understand that his companions were in such high spirits that they let him read it to them.

### Miscellaneous Bombshell

"Then your correspondent W. A. Darling drops his depth charge and suggests torpedoing 'H.M.S. Cinema' amidships when the time arrives by lodging an objection to the renewal of the licence."

*Hants Paper.*

We notice that a Wisconsin scientist named Dr. IVA ROMANOFSTALLOURIC is on his way to this country, and we have promised the printers and proof-readers never to refer to the matter again.



### Bar to Enterprise

"Although three buses might come along at the same time, passengers should be allowed to board only one at a time."

*Yorkshire Paper.*

Admiral YAMAMOTO boasted that he would lead the Japanese Fleet into San Francisco harbour and up the Thames to London. A keen look-out is being kept for midget submarines in the Round Pond at Kensington Gardens.

## Accidents Will Happen.

OVER-CONFIDENCE in great undertakings seems to be of two kinds. One lays stress upon men, the other upon their equipment, and the kinds have been unfortunately confused, I think, in our propaganda.

Thus one may say—

"The need for securing an immediate supply of drinking water is paramount, and every confidence is placed in the courage and resource of General Jack and the small and lightly-equipped party under his command which has set out to secure the desired objective. Despite the difficulty of the terrain, consisting as it does of rapidly rising and rock-strewn ridges difficult of ascent and still more difficult to negotiate under the handicap of a heavily-weighted vessel on the return journey, British pluck and endurance, which have seldom failed us in the past, are not likely to be found wanting in this new enterprise. Whatever the outcome, justice is on our side and in the long run justice is certain to prevail."

"Tidings of the expeditionary force recently sent out under General Jack are eagerly awaited."

"The first despatch from General Jack has been received by semaphore, and it is clear that the first phase of the campaign has ended successfully. Water has been discovered and the necessary preparations for securing it and transmitting it to the base are being rapidly put in train. The troops are in good spirits and eager to undertake the more hazardous part of their mission, which has yet to come."

"The campaign under General Jack is proceeding according to plan."

"Fortune was ever a fickle goddess, and an unexpected set-back is announced to the small expeditionary force which set out under Generals Jack and Jill against unparalleled odds on a well-nigh impossible undertaking. An accident which could hardly have been foreseen necessitated the prompt withdrawal of the former commander to a position which robbed him of the fruits of his initial victory and rendered it necessary for General Jill to conform to the new alignment with a similar precipitancy and a corresponding speed. The set-back is only of a temporary nature and fresh developments are hourly expected. More serious than the actual loss of the supplies in convoy is the physical injury to General Jack himself, who is suffering from severe abrasions to the occiput sustained during the course of the operations.

"We mean to try again," says the gallant General in an official communiqué from his headquarters at the base."

But one may also say—

"Never has an expedition set out under more favourable auspices than that proceeding at present under Generals Jack and Jill to secure necessary supplies. The boots of the party have been shod with special nails manufactured in our own British workshops, which defy all possibility of failure even in the arduous conditions which have to be encountered, and transport facilities are such as to combine strength, lightness and durability in a degree hitherto unparalleled. No better equipped force has ever set out on a like undertaking, and all messages from the front agree that from a mechanical point of view the successful issue of the adventure is practically assured.

Only a miracle in fact can deprive us of the spoils of victory."

I maintain that the second form of optimism is dangerous. It is better not to say too much in advance about the excellence of the boots and the invulnerability of the pail. For Fortune is a fickle goddess still, and (boots and pail notwithstanding) if she refuses to smile we are left in the predicament of having to say—

"Too much reliance appears to have been placed in the adequacy of the metal with which the boots of General Jack and his subordinate officer were furnished, when they found themselves faced by the treacherous and shifting rock formations natural to the eminence which they were called upon to surmount. It followed from this that the slightest deviation from the perpendicular during the descent exposed the whole operation of transport to unexpected and unnecessary perils. Nor is it certain that the actual utensil employed for conveying supplies was of a shape and construction best fitted to ensure complete success. Doubts have in fact been cast by well-informed authorities in the mountaineering world on the whole *matériel* at the disposal of the troops, and these doubts can only be dispelled when a full communiqué has been received from the Commanding Officer on the spot, and studied in detail by the authorities at home."

The objection to this account of the struggle is that it precisely contradicts what we said some time ago, and if we rule it out we have nothing to rely on but the simple statement that "The whole strategy was a failure and Generals Jack and Jill ought never to have been sent out at all."

Or even "Generals Jack and Jill made a slight error and tumbled down."

And is any prominent spokesman going to say a thing like that, and if he did will any sort of optimist be satisfied?

EVOE.

## Letter from an Aunt

HAVING travelled a good deal, dear Bill, I send a few hints which may be useful still.

For instance, when  
A Russian has the first initial N,  
You may be certain that his name is Nicholas,  
Or if V, Vladimir—  
Which has always struck me as somewhat ridiculous  
And rather queer:  
I mean, to have so little choice in a name;  
But I expect the Czarist regime was somehow originally to blame.

Now, if a Frenchman says "*Merci*,"  
He is not just thanking you for his good tea:  
He means he doesn't want any more,  
So don't go on waving the plate at him as before.  
And when Germans said "*Ich bin satt*,"  
They meant "Thank you, I am quite full," and they were usually quite fat.

But now Germans are all thin,  
And we simply must find out the best way to win;  
For whatever will happen if we can't?  
I am, dear Bill,

Your ever affectionate Aunt.



THE LATIN BLOC



"I must say I rather like this beige bread."

### If Only . . .

"IT'S over, and that's all I can say about it."

"Well, of course, I know dismantling a flat *is* a very tiring job, but I should have thought this was quite the best time for doing it. I mean, everybody wants to buy furniture, and one can dispose of waste paper to the salvage people, and of course *anybody* will buy old clothes, or give one the weight of silver and things like that. What *is* the matter? Are you feeling very ill?"

"Not at all. I was only smiling."

"I was afraid it was some kind of fit."

"It might have been, quite easily."

"Isn't your great-aunt pleased that you've done it all for her?"

"Pleased? Not in the least. She's upset because the furniture fetched so little money."

"I should have thought—"

"Yes, I know. So should I. But everyone said that now the price of furniture is controlled it makes all the difference. Besides, this is a bad time of year. Any other time of year would have been splendid. And her furniture was mostly mahogany bedroom furniture. If it had been walnut sitting-room furniture it would have fetched quite a lot of money."

"But she must have had *some* sitting-room furniture. What was that?"

"Walnut. But it was the *wrong* walnut. If it had only been a slightly different sort of walnut the man could have offered me five times the money."

"What about the china?"

"Ah, it was all *coloured* china. If it had been *white* there'd have been

an enormous demand. As it was, they made a great favour of taking it at all."

"I hardly like to ask about your great-uncle's collection of sporting prints. But I've always heard they were very valuable."

"Yes, so had I. And so had my great-aunt, which is much worse. But it seems that sporting prints went right off the market just about a fortnight ago. Up till then they were making fortunes right and left. The man said so."

"I suppose at least you got the weight of the silver?"

"That was rather extraordinary, too. It took two very strong men to carry it all away in bags, and they were quite done up by the time they reached the lift, and they were really



hardly able to heave it into the van. But they telephoned later and said it scarcely weighed anything, and they could only offer a very small sum."

"It seems a pity there was no jewellery. I know that's fetching huge prices."

"So did I. And my great-aunt gave me her emerald ring and a diamond star to sell for her. The man could have paid me hundreds if only they'd been rubies or sapphires instead. But nobody ever looks at emeralds or diamonds nowadays."

"How funny. That isn't at all what they said when my son wanted to buy an emerald ring for his fiancée."

"Very likely not. But it's what they'll say when she tries to pawn it later on."

"Dear, you mustn't let this make you cynical. She's not at all that kind of girl. At least, I suppose, you got rid of all the waste paper for salvage, and you can feel you're helping the war effort."

"I couldn't get any sacks or boxes to put it in, but in the end it got taken away in pillow-cases. There aren't any sacks or boxes left in the whole of England, apparently."

"I could have let you have two sacks, if only you'd asked me. And some cardboard boxes. But if they're so rare, perhaps I'd better try to dispose of them."

"Yes, dear, do. I shall be so interested to hear what happens. Meanwhile, I must go and see my great-aunt. She's written to say that she wants to buy a country cottage out of the proceeds of the sale."

"Cottages are almost impossible—"

"Don't say it, dear; I know. The house agents have already told me so."

"Still, you ought to be able to sublet the flat unfurnished."

"Oh, no. Only if it was a country house in the North of England, or a bungalow on the moors. They told me so." E. M. D.

## The Long Vacation

THE approach of the summer holidays has once more caused friction in the staff-room at St. Morbid's. Although the war has brought no change in the duration of the long vacation, the governors have made it clear that the masters are expected to spend at least eight of the ten weeks in some form of national service. Most of the friction is caused by the different interpretations put upon the term "national service." The

Head is the final arbiter of these problems, but so far he has proved himself as susceptible as ever to the wiles of unscrupulous shirkers, while remaining adamant before appeals for clemency and consideration based on the most reasonable and compassionate grounds. As a result the staff is now divided into two hostile camps—the shirkers and the workers. Of the workers, Biggott has been permitted to work as temporary unpaid barman at the Megthorpe Arms. While agreeing with the Head that such employment is somewhat unprofessional, Biggott avers that his magnanimous sacrifice of reputation will release a regular barman for more vital labours. Cartwright and Evans are to work on the land, Hawksworth will make munitions, and Sethcote and Lemon will demolish bombed property. My own position is still undecided. I should like to know more of Pringle-Watt's intentions before committing myself irremediably.

In 1940 I worked for six weeks and two days as a bus conductor for the L.P.T.B. and enjoyed myself immensely until P.-W. intervened. I soon established a reputation for repartee among my female comrades of the bell-punch, and my efficiency caused me to be singled out for rapid promotion. Then one day, while I was chaffing a lady passenger (after the manner of bus conductors) in the Cockney dialect, I was shocked to hear a familiar voice asking for a fourpenny to Camden Town. Pringle-Watt seemed to find the situation amusing. "I'll spend the day with you, Sopwhittle, old man," he said. "This should be interesting." For several hours he studied my methods intently. It was most disturbing. I was unable to indulge my ready wit for fear of

ridicule, and I became involved in several unpleasant altercations over problems of change. I was already well acquainted with Pringle-Watt's malicious sense of humour, and it came as no surprise to me when he attempted to humiliate me by tendering a ten-pound note for a ninepenny ride, by sitting upstairs when the bus was empty and by pushing the bell-button to stop the bus with annoying frequency and suddenness.

"Would you mind leaving the bell alone?" I said quite sharply.

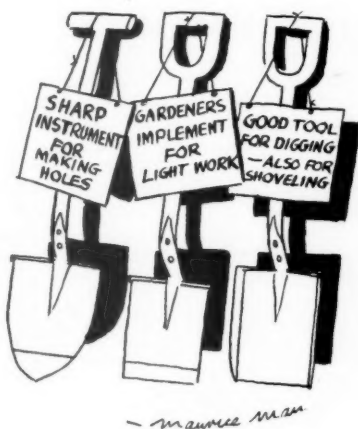
"Sorry," he said. "I was conducting an experiment to discover why conductors are able to defy the laws of momentum, but I see you have not yet acquired that distinction."

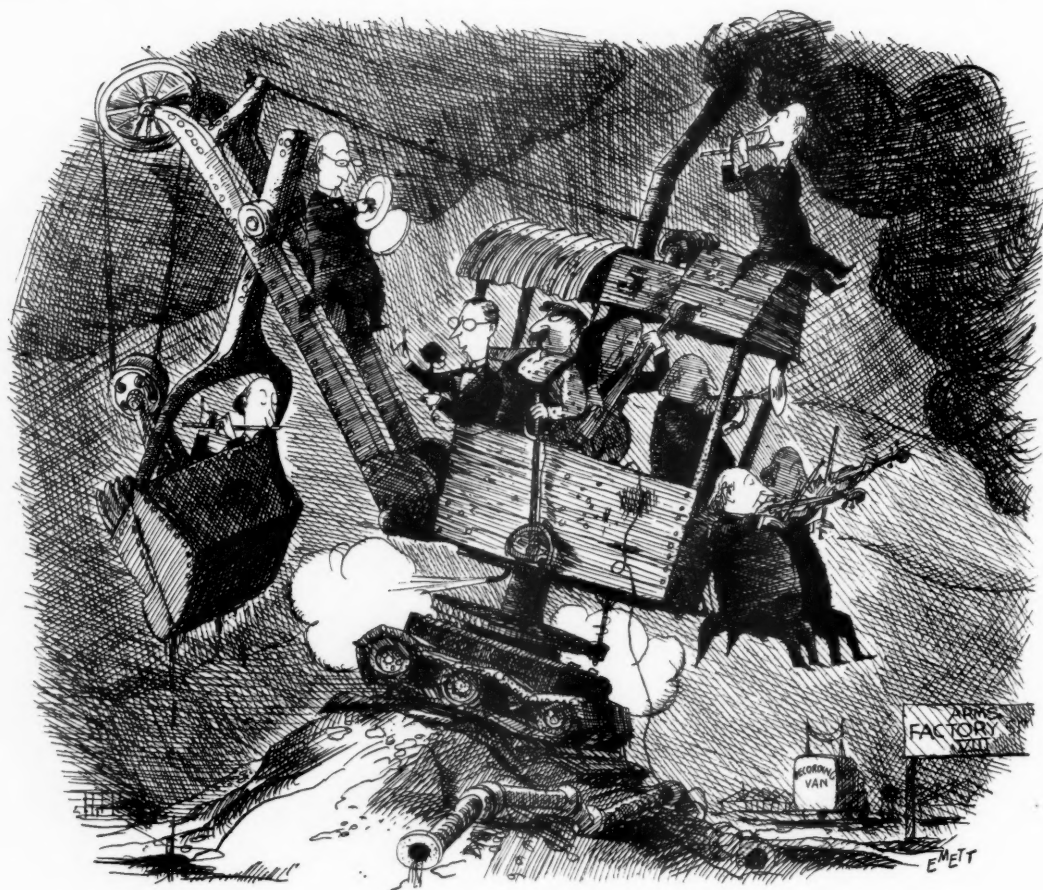
Pringle-Watt had now paid four-and-sixpence in fares, but he showed no signs of departure. To humour him I decided at some risk to let him travel free of charge. He accepted my gesture without a murmur of thanks. Later, however, when an inspector appeared, he became suddenly agitated and exclaimed in a loud voice, "I'm tired of travelling without a ticket—will no one allow me to pay my fare?" The inspector then examined my chart microscopically and warned me not to "try any funny stuff." Pringle-Watt left the bus shortly afterwards, taking my ticket-box with him. When I returned to the bus-depot it was to receive my dismissal. The box had been returned by a gentleman who had found it in a saloon bar off Hammersmith Broadway. That is Pringle-Watt's idea of a joke.

Last year Pringle-Watt again crossed my path when I found employment with the Megthorpe War Allotments Committee as a volunteer gardener. By means known only to himself he succeeded in obtaining my services for his own plot, and I was compelled to work in blazing sunshine while Pringle-Watt sat in his deck-chair criticizing my every move.

Pringle-Watt is of course the leader of the shirkers. Charteris is going to Scotland to collect geological specimens for highly important lectures to sixth-form military strategists on "Types of Terrain." Matthews is to attend a Summer School at Cambridge on Anglo-Soviet Relations. P.-W. himself is to spend the vacation in completing his important book, *Conics for the Million*.

Since the Head has refused me permission to act as temporary unpaid liaison-officer to the Commandos, I shall probably obtain employment in a coal-mine. Pringle-Watt should draw the line at that.





*"Well, I think it would 'ave made a better broadcast WITHOUT incidental music."*

### Letters to a Conscript Father

**M**Y DEAR FATHER,—Now that your Course of Disciplinary Training is approaching its conclusion it is possible that some information regarding Webbing Equipment may prove beneficial. (Sorry to sound so pompous, but I've just been reading Daily Routine Orders for the last fortnight; whoever writes them writes like that all the time, and it's catching.)

What I mean is, you'll get some webbing when your square-bashing's finished, and some griff will come in handy. I wish Bairstow were here to do some illustrations, but he's still having mumps.

Well, a soldier in a train told me that the Army have ninety-three bits

of brass on their webbing, and that they all have to be polished; but that was some time ago, and they may have been stopped polishing it since then—although, if they have, they've probably been started again by now, because nothing is static in Service life. I dragged the Army into this because when you get your R.A.F. webbing you'll find that there are a lot of brass bits on that too; perhaps not ninety-three, but probably the Army don't have ninety-three either—you can't believe soldiers.

The fact that goods made of raw materials in short supply owing to war conditions are advertised in this paper should not be taken as an indication that they are necessarily available for export.

At any rate, the consoling thing about your webbing is that you are forbidden to polish the brass. However much you want to, you must fight against it. Perhaps you think I'm being over-emphatic, Dad, but you may have noticed already that polishing becomes an obsession with some people; they go absolutely dotty on polishing, and can't break themselves of it.

This has never worried me, I'm glad to say, but Bairstow told me a terrible story about a man at his last Station who just lived for his brasses. Every day after tea he'd set his stall out on his bed and polish anything (of his own, I mean) that showed the slightest promise of coming up bright. He had

seven or eight different tins of metal polish, Bairstow said, and he used to experiment continually with various combinations in the hope of hitting on some sort of supreme elixir. He cleaned everything he had, every night, from his cap-badge to his mess-tin, even including his spare tunic. This kept him going till Lights Out, and he used to start again at Reveille. Finally, he took to polishing his bed-rail where the paint had peeled off, breathing on it and trying to make it bright enough to see in the dark; the last thing he did before being taken away was to polish all his small change and put it in the middle of his bed-space in a circle, round his boots.

So, you see, when you feel an itch to polish more than you need, check yourself.

Now, back to the webbing. Although you're forbidden to polish it, it's got to be clean. This makes it difficult, because if you're on parade with a whole lot of airmen who have unlawfully polished their bits of webbing-brass, then you'll probably attract unwelcome attention because yours are dull. But I'm just telling you, and you must use your initiative to decide what's the best thing to do.

The same sort of difficult rules are laid down for the webbing itself. You're not supposed to blanco it, but it must be a certain shade of bluey-white, and the only way to get this shade is either to blanco it, or to scrub and scrub and scrub it, every night and every morning, until you've scrubbed all the dye out that the manufacturers were ordered to put in. If you blanco it, you'll most probably be charged, and if it's dirty you certainly will. Again, it's a matter for your own discretion. I must tell you later on about Bairstow's friend, A.C. Digtray, and the trouble he got into over his webbing.

But, first, about putting your webbing together. There are thirteen separate pieces of it, and the first time you see them you'll think they couldn't possibly be assembled into anything at all. The equipment was designed by a woman, they say, though nobody knows exactly who, which is perhaps just as well for her. Another thing nobody knows is how to assemble the thirteen pieces into the completed harness. People who think they know almost always get the water-bottle carrier hanging down in front and the rucksack thing upside down.

The pieces have funny names, such as "Strap Adjustment," "Brace Right," "Piece Side Left," "Frog Bayonet," and so on, and any properly

decorated barrack-room has an enormous framed notice about assembling webbing, with two pictures and twenty-seven paragraphs of instructions. Sometimes people try to do their assembling from this notice, but night usually falls while they're still at it. Those who push on by artificial light and manage to finish it always find they have four pieces over that won't fit in anywhere.

This doesn't sound very helpful, I know, and you'll be wondering how you are to assemble your webbing, so I'll give you the best advice I can. I told you that nobody knew how, but that wasn't absolutely true. In every camp there are one or two airmen who do know how. Either they've taken a course on it, or they've devoted seven days' leave to mastering it thoroughly. The only other explanation is that their characters have just that leavening of feminism needed for them to glimpse the designer's intention.

But the point is this. These airmen are *only too glad* to assemble as much webbing as you can bring them. Assembling webbing is probably the thing they do better than anything else; it may even be the only thing they can do—and they're just delighted to do it, basking in the admiration of the people looking on. If this seems improbable to you, Dad, then you'll just have to take my word for it, that's all. And remember, when you get your webbing, begin at once to scout round for the local webbing-

minded airman. You'll find him easily enough.

Oh, yes, about Bairstow's friend Digtray. He was put on a Charge for having dirty webbing—that is, webbing that hadn't been got bluey-white in colour. He got three days' jankers, reporting to the Guard-house every hour in full equipment. Naturally, having to wear full equipment, he couldn't get it scrubbed or blancoed bluey-white, so every morning on parade he got charged again and given three more days' jankers. Bairstow eventually got him out of it by cracking him on the knee with a cricket-bat and nearly breaking his leg. So everything was all right, of course, and he was able to scrub the stuff the right colour in hospital.

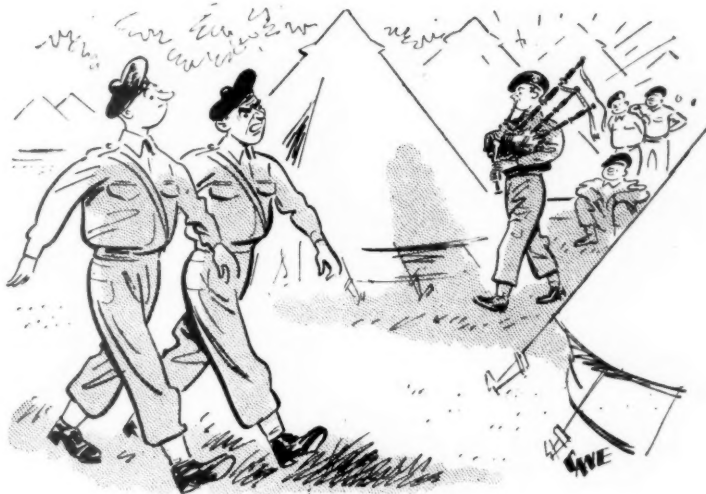
Anyway, let me know how you get on with it.

Your loving Son PETER.

P.S.—There's a bit always gets lost, called a "Strap Kicking." Nobody knows why. (Why it's called that, I mean.)

### An Astronomical Figure

THROUGH the drear fog of War  
I see nothing clearly;  
Nothing at all; nothing at all,  
But one fixed star:  
England's star merely.  
By it I stand or fall,  
Loving her dearly. C. O'R.



"'McAlpine's Farewell to Drumlochrie'—why does he have to play that highbrow stuff?"



## H. J. Talking

**M**Y name is Harmony Jenkins and a scientist is what I mainly am. It is a good life, plenty of variety and prestige, and one never knows but what one might turn out useful as well as just happily occupied. My line is psychological physics, though I am far from being narrow-minded and enjoy a good experiment even if off my beat. For example, I once mixed equal quantities of all the chemicals in my laboratory, first forecasting the result by the Law of Averages. It should have come to a black sticky mixture smelling of camphor, but before I was half-way through there was an explosion, and my wife asked me not to start again owing to comment among the neighbours, those on the side where the bath landed taking any occasion to be critical.

She is far from encouraging about my work, as there are rifts between us, one being that her people bridle if you refer to them as relations and not relatives, while my people bridle if you refer to them as relatives and not relations. However, I was advised this was not enough for a divorce, not even when we had the fire. It was quite a small fire to begin with. We kept it in a stove. But one day my wife got obstinate about the Seven Wonders of the World. She stuck to it they were chosen annually by the Swedes. She got so obstinate she took the fire out of the stove and heaved it here, there and everywhere, as some people say. I should have thought it burnt enough for two divorces.

When my wife was at home—before she got hold of me, most of her family were net makers. They had a large net in the middle of the floor, and all worked at their own

bits, hoping that in time it would all be one big net; but what with Uncle Ted doing purl and Uncle Jobbett plain, and what with quarrels, and Aunt Endor not doing her share, and Aunt Hedwig making larger holes than the others to finish sooner, it never seemed to get much forrarder. The kids used to get worked into the net, and then cutting them loose made gaps which led to arguments, until it was decided that the parents should always repair the damage. There was one of my wife's family, called Syd, who refused to go into the net and took a night-school course and became a shoe shiner, but the family used to go and stay with him, taking the net with them, and it covered his pitch so that the customers got their shoes caught in it, which was bad for trade. He issued a notice saying his family had gone home, but by then the goodwill had vanished.

Science is not very expensive if you don't spend money on it. During a long experiment I put the apparatus into pawn, where it fizzes away, costing me nothing, not at least till I come to get it out. I expect you are wondering what I do with it when I have finished a piece of research. Well, quite a lot of it can be worked into the next experiment with a little ingenuity, such being test-tubes and string. Some of it, however, is ad hoc, and when done with I use it for presents. On her last birthday I gave my wife a rat suffering from measles. I had been investigating whether it was curable, which it did not seem to be. Since my next job was to study the effect of heat on memory I could not work the rat in, as being sick its memory might be defective before it even went into the oven. Nothing spoils science like not having everything average and normal to begin with. I once ruined a test of the influence of electric shocks on concentration by not noticing that the child I had borrowed was wearing rubber-soled shoes.

I never take my scientific equipment with me on a fishing trip, not because of its size but because of its lack of cosiness. I always like a fishing shack to be homely, and that is why I go in so much for breakages. A piece of furniture which looks as if it had just come from the makers has no appeal for me whatever. Until a cup has been chipped that cup does not accompany me on a holiday. Some of my cups have edges like saws. Nobody feels they need live up to them. Things are different at home, where I have a good deal of trouble with my wife over mats which she likes about the table to go under things. To try to cure her I put a doormat on the table when we had friends to dinner. It said "Welcome" and had room for three places and a soup tureen, but it never improved her much. She differs from me in liking a table polished. I like a table you can put your elbows on without them slipping. If anyone lent me a shack with a polished table in it I should go out first thing and buy some emery paper. By the way, as to the fish I catch on holidays. That depends where the shack is. If it is on a river I go for salmon and trout, while if it is on the coast I go more for lobsters. I bear all fish fairly easily as eating, but fish I have caught myself and can count as free fish I bear easiest of all.



"Hand up the girl who stopped a runaway tank in High Street this morning."

"French gentleman (Count) requires large room and bath with good-class family."—Advt. in "Daily Telegraph."

Is he ready to take his turn?



## Are Your Answers Really Necessary?

IT was like old times to see a questionnaire in the June issue of *Horizon*: twenty questions with the warning at the end, "If you can say 'Yes' to more than half these questions you are definitely Fascist-minded." How long is it, I wonder—well, we may as well make that Question Number One now:

1. How long is it (for goodness' sake) since I last adopted this method of helping you to explore the inner workings of your mind?

I see no reason why we shouldn't go interrogatively on; it may help us to recapture the mood of the dear dead days before.....(*kindly insert to-day's bad news*), before the fall of Tobruk, before the fall of France, before the rise in the cost of living. But I agree that we cannot possibly get a quick result of any kind with these questions unless they are so framed as to be capable of being answered either by "Yes" or (on the other hand, to put it mildly) by "No." As I see no convenient way of so framing Question Number One that the temptation to be rude in monosyllabically answering it may not be too much for you we will pass straight on to Question Number Two and the others which, by all the rules at any rate of mathematics, should succeed it.

2. When you hear that the Navy has performed some immense and complicated nautical operation "quietly and without fuss," do these words seem to you to mean anything, and if so do you think it was necessary to express it?

3. Does your hat often roll into the aisle at the pictures, and get kicked?

4. Far?

5. Do some popular compositions seem to you to bear all the marks of things written for the piano and later orchestrated, and are you aware that this is not the best way to write orchestral music?

6. Has it ever struck you that in the answers to a questionnaire like this there is a difference between what people think and what people are willing in the presence of a particular questioner to say they think?

7. Have you ever had to ask an hotel porter to explain to you the correct direction in which to push a revolving door?

8. Do the names Dickeray and Thackens call to your mind vague literary associations which you can't quite place?

9. Or did you once know a Mr. Dickeray, a rather stout man who used to smoke a carved pipe and breed waxbills?

10. Or was his name Thackens after all?

11. "He looks a bit young for a Major." Do you think this or a similar remark was first made of an officer in a Roman legion, or would you go further back than that?

12. Are you able to reconcile your knowledge that it is very difficult to make money by means of an amateur entertainment with the popular idea, fostered by Hollywood, that any kind of amateur entertainment will rake in any sum of money that happens to be needed?

13. When you break a piece of toast roughly in half, is the left-hand piece usually the smaller?

14. Do you agree that things have not come to a pretty pass until you can't start a *Times* correspondence about grammar or the æsthetic value of a particular word?

15. Has it ever occurred to you that to use Gothic type for the word "Sunday" in a calendar is to make a subtle

literary effect with more than a touch of surrealism about it?

16. In the remark "We'll split the tip: you provide the money, and I'll give it to him," there is a fallacy. Can you detect this fallacy, and if so, would you make the remark all the same if you thought the person addressed unlikely to detect it?

17. By the phrase "vast majority" do you understand a number vastly more than the minority, or an immense number *somewhat* more?

18. Did it take you very long to recognize that the preceding question could not be answered by "Yes" or "No"?

19. If Question Eighteen had not made it clear that I recognized this myself, would you immediately have written a sarcastic letter to the Editor pointing it out, you big exhibitionist?

20. I put it to you that you are really very much annoyed at having been deprived of a reason for complaining to the Editor?

That's twenty; too much is enough, as somebody once explosively said in a dissimilar connection. We now reach the gloomy and disproportionately troublesome business of telling you how to collate the answers. It should be possible to work out a score-sheet by means of which, checking it with your results, you could see mathematically confirmed all your most cherished delusions about your own character. But is the drawing up of this score-sheet, is your use of it—are these pursuits for war-time? (Question Twenty-one.)

R. M.





*"Is the Great Khan's journey really necessary?"*

### *It's All Very Well Now.*

**I**T'S all very well now, but when I'm an old lady I think I shall be amazed, and even a bit annoyed maybe, when I look back at these years of ceaseless effort and consider what I did to keep my country free.

If only I were making munitions, or had joined the Forces, my grandchildren, I know, would not think I'd fought in vain, but why on earth I did some of the things I am doing now will be so terribly tiresome to explain.

How can I convince them that it was to England's good that I went to Waterloo to meet two goats travelling from Camberley, and drove them in a car across to Victoria, where I put them in another train, third class, non-smoker of course, to Amberley?

Why, do you suppose, when London was burning, did I find myself alone with a Church Army lady from Rye, and why did we do nothing at all except drink port and lemon?  
(She had a dish-cover on her head, tied on with a Zingari tie.)

And will my children believe me when I tell them that I carried a flame within me that no mortal power could douse, not even when I was made to take a vanload of corsets and molasses to confuse already hopelessly confused Admirals at Trinity House?

I must confess I sometimes get a bit confused myself. Why am I doing this? I ask and wonder—why in Britain's name did I do that? Did I really imagine it would lead us grimly forward to Victory to share my smoked-salmon sandwiches with the Home Office cat?

All my little war stories will sound so frivolous. "The old lady is getting very frail," they will say—"very soft in the brain"; But I shall nod my head and say, "Believe me, my children, in my young days everybody was automatically quite insane."  
V. G.



### THE SCAPEGOATS

"Which of us is going to lead the herd this time?"



## Impressions of Parliament

### Business Done

**Tuesday, June 23rd.—House of Lords:**  
The Convoy Gets Through.

**House of Commons: Premonitory Symptoms.**

**Wednesday, June 24th.—House of Commons: Oliver's Travels—a Short Story.**

**Thursday, June 25th.—House of Commons: Secret Upon Secret.**

**Tuesday, June 23rd.**—The Censor can have no objection to your scribe's recording that to-day Ministers turned up their coat-collars (metaphorically) and blew (figuratively) on their fingers, so cold was the atmosphere in the House of Commons.

This was no reflection on the excellent work of Messrs. HOLMAN and HATTERSLEY, Parliament's own Clerks of Works, whose task it is, behind the scenes, to ensure that Members are warm (or cool) and able to see. It was spiritual cold that afflicted the Treasury Bench—nasty, icy, bone-chilling blasts that are so much more difficult to endure than the most scorching of controversial fires.

Old Parliamentary hands know that icy atmosphere. It is the most dangerous and ominous of all Parliamentary temperatures. It comes before a storm.

Mr. CLEMENT ATTLEE, Deputy Prime Minister, had to take charge,



"IMPERIUM ET LIBERTAS"

Mr. Harold Macmillan makes his maiden speech as Parliamentary Under-Secretary for the Colonies.

Mr. WINSTON CHURCHILL being otherwise engaged in Washington. And Mr. CLEMENT ATTLEE patently did not enjoy the situation. He fingered his papers, read them through and through, and glanced with alternate hope and hopelessness at the long closely-packed ranks opposite.

For he had an unpleasant story to

tell. It was the story of the sudden sloop of German General ROMMEL (overnight dubbed Field Marshal by a grateful HITLER) on much-beleaguered Tobruk, in Libya, and of the fall of that town, with 25,000 or more British troops and untold quantities of equipment. The fight had seemed to be going our way, and Mr. CHURCHILL, a week or two earlier, had expressed the view that we had a right to be "more than satisfied" with it.

Then, abruptly as is the way with modern war, the whole thing went wrong. ROMMEL had almost knocked himself out by the vigour of his own lunge—but we were not able to take advantage of the fact and push him right over. In fact we did not push him at all, he pushed us—and Mr. ATTLEE had the unhappy task of trying to explain how it had all happened.

Like Mr. CHURCHILL earlier, Mr. ATTLEE preferred to read a report from General AUCHINCLOSS, Army commander in Libya. This told the now all-too-familiar story of bad luck and overwhelming.

The House listened in stony silence.

Mr. ATTLEE sat down, looking for the first signs of the bursting storm. There was none. One or two Members got up and asked supplementary questions, quite quietly and calmly.

Mr. ATTLEE stood up and answered, looking surprised at the zephyr-like gentleness of the breeze. He mentioned that the "battle was not yet over." No one turned a hair—although the cliché would normally have produced a hoot from the critics. Then (hopefully) he trotted out the cliché of all clichés about "moral superiority over the enemy." Stonier and icier silence.

Baffled, Mr. ATTLEE sat down once more, having offered a full debate as soon as this could fruitfully be held.

Lord WINTERTON, without raising his voice, announced that Mr. CHURCHILL, as Minister of Defence, was responsible for the state of affairs revealed, and said he should want a full statement on how it occurred. Thus encouraged, Mr. ARTHUR GREENWOOD, leading the Opposition, said he should demand a debate without undue delay, and Sir PERCY HARRIS, the Liberal leader, asked for strict rationing of "official soothing-syrup" on this and all other topics.

So far, so puzzling. There was everybody looking grim, nobody saying anything much to match the facial expressions.

Sir JOHN WARDLAW-MILNE rose slowly, adjusted his monocle with elaborate calm, and confided that he

and his friends would desire to table a motion of no-confidence in the central direction of the war. Never was a vote of censure on a Govern-



SIR WARDLAW DE MILNE  
throweth down the gauntlet to the  
Government.

ment more casually, more gently, put forward.

A few Members cheered quietly, with the expressions of occupants of a dentist's waiting-room. Mr. ATTLEE looked a bit like the dentist, feeling grimly for his forceps and drills. Then, quite suddenly, he went off the deep end, as dentists will. Reddening, he declared that Sir JOHN was looking for a scapegoat. This description of the critics' aim drew a short sharp yell of contradiction, which Mr. ATTLEE accepted without protest. Quiet, once more.

Sir JOHN nonchalantly mentioned that he would pass over "the insinuation" by Mr. ATTLEE, and Mr. JOHN DUGDALE, from the Socialist benches, asked that a Russian General be sent to Cairo to teach us a thing or two.

Lord WINTERTON gleefully moved, as an amendment, that the General be sent to the House to become Prime Minister.

Then—queerest twist in this queer situation—Sir GEORGE HUME began a long harangue, appealing for calm, no panic, and support for everybody. He got so hot and scarlet about it that the House, for the first time, began to show signs of heat and



*"... and then wen I wakes in the mornin' there's always that 'orrid 'ill in front o' me, and wen I goes to bed at night there's such a norrible 'ush—the Blitz fer me, I'm goin' 'ome."*

irritation. Sir GEORGE finished his address (which was technically a question) at the top of his voice, with a Greek chorus of protest supplied by Members of all Parties.

And so they left the matter, for the time being, to launch a long discussion on family allowances. Everybody seemed in favour, but Sir KINGSLEY WOOD, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, remarking that the thing would cost money, asked for time to think it over.

Their Lordships saw Admiral-of-the-Fleet Lord CORK and Admiral-of-the-Merchant-Fleet Lord MARCHWOOD fight another of their brilliant actions in defence of merchant seamen. They wanted tuberculosis contracted because of war service in the merchant navy to qualify its victims for a pension.

Lord SIMON, in unwontedly testy mood, said that was precisely what the Bill they were discussing was for.

Noble Lords made incredulous noises, and the LORD CHANCELLOR's handsome wig fairly bristled with indignation. He acidly disclaimed any intention to

be "irrelevant, fraudulent or scandalous," and spoke meaningfully of "logic-chopping."

Law-Lord MAUGHAM contradicted everything the LORD CHANCELLOR had said, other Lords joined in the scrap, Lord MARCHWOOD remarked that the fight between the lawyers encouraged him (on the authority of the old saw) to hope that honest folk like merchant seamen would come by their own, and then Lord SIMON agreed to look into the matter again and try to meet the critics.

*Wednesday, June 24th.*—Apart from a somewhat vigorous questioning of Sir ARCHIBALD SINCLAIR, the Air Minister, about those "air superiority in Libya" claims, the House was listless to-day.

Mr. OLIVER LYTTTELTON, Minister of Production, was about to produce a report on his visit to the U.S.A. when Mr. JAMES MAXTON intervened with a protest about the length of Ministerial statements which eat into debating time. Members used up five minutes on their protests, and Mr. LYTTTELTON, permitted to proceed,

drily remarked that his statement would not take so long as the protests. He was not quite correct—it took six minutes.

Mr. MAXTON, also a master of dry humour, inquired naïvely whether, in the vast expanses of the United States, the Minister had encountered the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of War Transport, who had been "roving about there for more than a year." Mr. LYTTTELTON replied, as blandly, that he had met Sir ARTHUR SALTER.

Then the House went on to discuss Colonial policy, Mr. HAROLD MACMILLAN, the Colonial Under-Secretary, opening the debate. Excitement over this topic was exceedingly moderate.

*Thursday, June 25th.*—The House of Commons went into secret session on a secret report on a secret statement supposed to have been divulged by an M.P. (whose name was kept secret) as a result of a previous secret session.

Then there was a debate on the threatened ruin of the strawberry crop as a result of the fixing of prices.

## Our Booking-Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

### The Last Enemy

THIS book (*The Last Enemy*, by RICHARD HILLARY. MACMILLAN, 7/6) has the double interest of an autobiography and a record of war service in the R.A.F. Mr. HILLARY, who is only twenty-three, was an undergraduate at Trinity, Oxford, when the war began. Although he had intellectual interests and intended to become a writer, he conformed with the spirit of his college which, he says, "radiated an atmosphere of alert Philistinism." Himself an athlete, he belonged to an athletic set which ignored the scholars of the college. "Through force of circumstance they had to work hard; they had neither the time nor the money to cultivate the dilettante browsing which we affected. . . . We were cliquey, extremely limited in our horizon, quite conscious of the fact, and in no way dissatisfied about it." Meanwhile the German menace was growing, and the alleged decadence of England and of English youth weighed increasingly on RICHARD HILLARY and his friends, in spite of their apparent self-satisfaction. So, when the war broke out, they joined up at once, without any surface enthusiasm but with the private intention of showing that though they despised organized emotion and patriotism their effete veneer was not as deep as their dislike of interference, and their lack of discipline no bar to them getting the best of HITLER's "dogma-fed youth."

In spite of his antipathy to discipline, which showed itself freely during the period before Dunkirk, RICHARD HILLARY was anxious to distinguish himself as a pilot, and worked hard to that end. In a talk with a great friend and fellow-pilot, PETER PEASE, he explained his attitude to the war and to his own part in it. Following GOETHE, and rejecting the religious standpoint, he was concerned with his own potentialities—"I am fighting this war because I believe that, in war, one can swiftly develop all one's faculties to a degree it would normally take half a lifetime to achieve"; and, he added, he had chosen air fighting because it meant individual combat, self-reliance, and total responsibility for one's own fate. PETER PEASE, whose reserve and absence of bravado impressed while exasperating RICHARD HILLARY, refused for some time to be drawn into giving his own views, but admitted finally that he looked at the war from the standpoint of a Christian. "I reject Nazism," he said, "because, unlike you, I believe its purpose is to stamp out the divine spark in Man. . . . What I'm trying to say is this, that men who possess the religious sense know that you can't injure others without

doing harm to yourself." To this HILLARY replied that the mass of mankind left him cold, and the conversation ended with PETER predicting that he would soon feel differently—"Something bigger than you and me is coming out of this, and as it grows you'll grow with it."

The Battle of Britain put an end for the time being to speculation and self-questioning. RICHARD HILLARY was in the thick of it, losing friends almost daily in the terrific fighting of those weeks, and at last knocked out himself, falling out of his aeroplane unconscious and badly burned, but recovering consciousness in time to operate his parachute. He was three hours in the water, keeping up a tuneless chant, varied occasionally with cries for help, an occupation which gave him a certain melancholy satisfaction, "for I had once written a short story in which the hero (falling out of a liner) had done just this. It was rejected."

His injuries were so appalling that two V.A.D.s fainted while helping with his dressings, but plastic surgery and his own vitality pulled him through and restored him to the outside world. During this period PETER PEASE was killed, and his fiancée, DENISE, called on HILLARY. When he was better he saw a good deal of her, and argued with her as he had previously argued with PETER, combating her belief in a future life, and trying to uproot her conviction that PETER was still with her. In an interchange which her sincerity makes very moving she replies—"I know that everything is not over for Peter and me. I know it with all the faith that you are so contemptuous of. . . . Peter lives with me. He neither comes nor goes, he is ever-present." She asks him if he really believes he can go through life to the end, always taking and never giving, but he refuses to abandon what she calls his "Machiavellian pose," and parts from her as he had earlier parted from PETER with his philosophy of egotism still intact. In the last chapter, under the shock of an experience in a London blitz, he throws his philosophy over, acknowledging "that despised Humanity which I had so scorned and ridiculed to Peter." One cannot read this book without a feeling of interest in the future development of someone who has not only gone through so much so early, but has attempted throughout to understand the meaning of his experiences.

H. K.

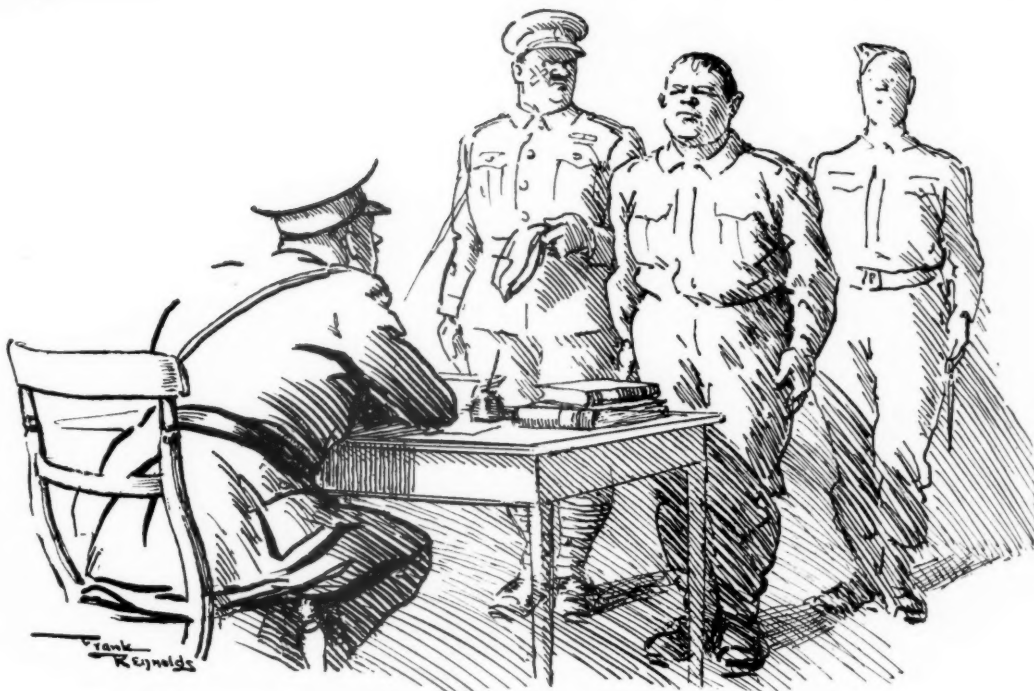
### The Playful Muse

No one is better qualified to write of light verse than the Dean of DURHAM. He is as skilful in Gilbertian patter song as in the mingled grave and gay of an Eton "Vale." He has not only sung himself but raised a nest of singing-birds in his pupil-room. In *Poets at Play* (METHUEN, 6/-) he has produced a book easier to praise than to describe. It is not merely an anthology. As in the works of Sir Benjamin Backbite, another artist in light verse, there meanders down the page and between the poems "a neat rivulet of text" wherein the Dean explains his preferences. With a pleasant and lightly-worn learning he discourses on rhyme and metre, the trotting of the trochaic and the cantering of the dactylic; on bathos, of which he cites CALVERLEY as a master; on the heavenly irresponsibility of LEAR (is he quite just to his heartrending pathos?); on the art of parody. His choice is largely modern, for, save for the Anti-Jacobin, parody only came into its own in the last century, and the humour of the elder poets was satirical rather than playful. There is much that is familiar but much that is fresh, and the reader will find friends "loved long since and lost awhile" because he knew not where to look—HOUSMAN's Greek tragedy, for instance, or the Chavender or Chub, buried in an old bound volume of

## WORLD WAR

THE British Navy is now facing danger in most of the seas of the world. Remember, it is to the sacrifices of these sailors that you owe many of the comforts of civilized life which you still enjoy. In return, will you not contribute to the PUNCH COMFORTS FUND? A gift to this Fund enables you to express your gratitude in tangible form. You owe it to our sailors to see that they are well provided with extra comforts. Donations will be gratefully received and acknowledged by Mr. Punch at PUNCH COMFORTS FUND, 10 Bouverie Street, London, E.C.4.





"Have you any other excuse, apart from this theory about being allergic to Sergeant-Majors?"

Mr. Punch. It is dangerous to try a fall with Dr. ALINGTON, but the risk must be taken when he says that CALVERLEY "gives a spirited imitation of Scott" beginning "Sikes, housebreaker of Houndsditch." Surely, Mr. Dean, it is of MACAULAY, and here is an excuse for you to read C. S. C. yet again.

B. D.

who brought us over a brand-new submarine: the France, undefeated and undefeatable, who fights under the cross of Lorraine for her immemorial place in a reconstructed Europe.

F. P. E.

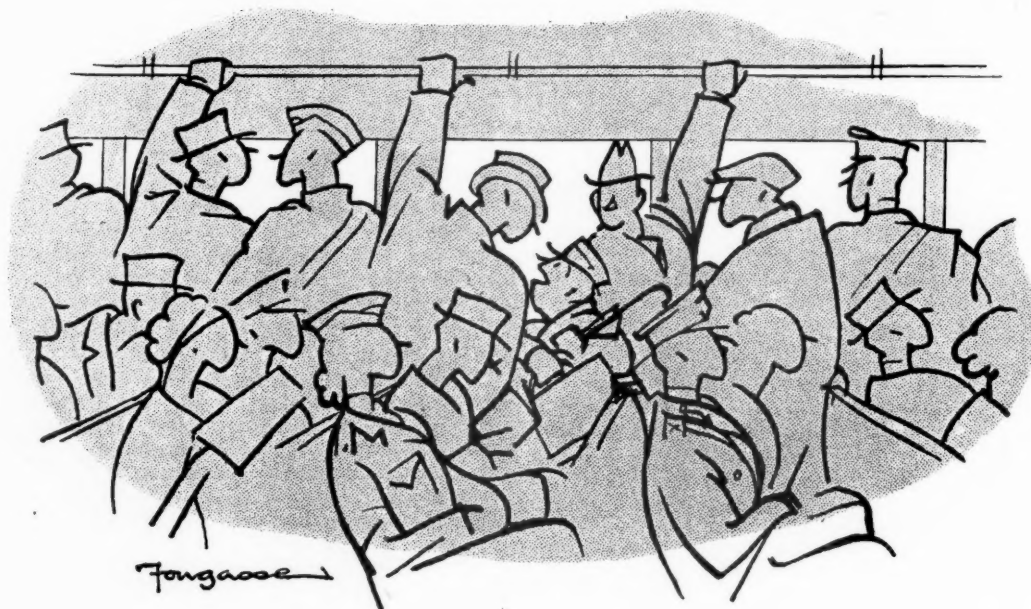
### France and de Gaulle

A French officer and journalist who dined with VON RIBBENTROP in the April of 1934 found himself discussing German tanks and their chances against the Maginot Line, his host's roseate opinion being backed up by a reference to "your best technician Colonel de Gaulle." This surprised M. PHILIPPE BARRÈS; and he was still more surprised when at HITLER's Nuremberg show in September, Herr HUEHNLEIN of the cars and tanks asked him "What is my great French colleague doing?" France was not, in those days, interested in *Charles de Gaulle* (HUTCHINSON, 9/6) and his ideas. Now they are her one hope; and M. BARRÈS has written an intimate, detailed and stirring book on their past, present and future. He shows how DE GAULLE—an "elemental" man with "none of the marks of our epoch"—having failed to convert the tired old pundits of the French High Command, turned to civilians; how REYNAUD, his advocate, was foiled in the Chamber; how France fell, unprepared; and how the redeeming stand at Quimper, DE GAULLE's alternative to Bordeaux, was countermanded by REYNAUD's mistress. The rest is the story of Free France—from DE GAULLE himself to the tug-boat captain of Havre

### When Boney was at Boulogne.

The recurring theme of English martial gallantry makes *Dover Harbour* (COLLINS, 10/6) a topical as well as an historical novel. Here you have the legend of two families, a ship-builder's and a banker's, at issue over the future of a Cinque Port. *Fagg* the ship-builder ardently seeks its extension and greatness, *Rocheport* the banker is all for more immediately remunerative enterprises. The town plays chorus to its *Montagues* and *Capulets*; even the London of Mr. PITT is invoked on their behalf; across the Channel NAPOLEON builds up the *armée de l'Angleterre*. But enmeshed, as now, in the conflicts they have had no say in determining, mothers as heroic as *Elizabeth Rocheport*, children as courageous and warm-hearted as *George Rocheport* and *Susan Fagg*, exhibit (with apologies, almost, for daring to be mothers and lovers still) the pathos of their individual lives against the welter of national and civic interests. Here are two love-stories, at once epic and lyrical; and these gradually pervade the impersonal element and surmount it. The more exciting is that of *Charles Fagg*, *soi-disant* smuggler and secret agent of Mr. PITT, and his *Caroline*, whose solitary voyage to the Goodwins to warn her lover is the most stirring adventure of Mr. THOMAS ARMSTRONG's undeniably stirring book.

H. P. E.



"Would you let me pass, Sir—I want to get out two stops ago."

### A Piece About the Pendulum

["Our commanders . . . are not despondent. They are convinced that the next swing of the pendulum will go in our favour, and the swing will be deeper."—A Special Correspondent on the Libya Front.]

**G**AME, Set, and Match! Well, that is how we feel about the statement printed above. It wins all possible prizes.

First, as a classic example of what we may call the Pendulum, or Tidal School of Warfare. We ourselves, in our youth, in the last encounter with "Hitlerite Germany," wrote a war-poem about the turn of the tide; and we apologize. In those days we did not know so much about tides as we do now. We know now that when the tide turns it is not, as so many thinkers seem to think nowadays, the end of everything. The fact that the tide has turned *at last* is no sort of guarantee that the tide will not turn *again*—quite soon. Indeed, this is happening every day, at intervals of seven, six, in some places five, hours—or even less; and in spite of a lot of hard thinking and swearing, no one yet has been able to alter this odd arrangement. The tide, therefore, is a singularly unhappy figure of speech for anyone who is hinting at Ultimate Victory. I should agree that it was not at all a bad metaphor to apply to the recent years in Libya—but that is another matter.

And further, as we think we have remarked before, the whole psychology of this expression is alien to the British War-Mind, and may be a hindrance to the British War-Effort. The notion, we mean, that victory will not be the result of our fortitude, efficiency and toil, but will be produced by one of the ordinary placid processes of Nature. When the Second Front (whatever that may be) is in being at last, it will be a poor compliment, we mean, to the character, the intellect and the efficiency of our leaders and people if the "military expert" has nothing then to say except "the tide has turned." For that will be to say that the formation of the Second Front was a thing as inevitable as the arrival of noon; which, we imagine, it was not—and may not be now. To say "the worm has turned" would be to say something at once more generous, correct and encouraging.

But if it were possible to think of an image less happy than the Tide—we mean if some brilliant man, or some committee of brilliant men, were invited to sit down and discover, if they could, a more inept and fatuous

figure of speech than the Tide—there can be little doubt that the choice would fall, if it fell anywhere, upon the Pendulum.

The Pendulum, believe it or not, is really worse than the Tide. There are always people, as we have already confessed, who are a little vague about the workings of the tides. But, even as these simple minds perceive the tidal system, there is some event in it, and some variety. The ebb-tide, for example, is not a mere twin to the flood-tide. The ebb takes our Drakes towards the enemy, and our manufactures to the market. The flood brings home our friends, our captives, our prizes or our purchases. The ebb reveals the mud, the sand, the shallows and the channels. It delights the eye of the artist, and, up to a point, the eye of the mariner, who likes to know where he is. The flood, on the other hand, producing, as it does, an unbroken expanse of water, disgusts the eye of the artist but pleases the eye of the mariner—though even he is not wholly satisfied, since the same tide that bears him homeward may also set him aground on the hidden banks. At all events,

there is a difference, many differences, between flood-tide and ebb.

Can the same be said about the swings of a pendulum?

No.

The pendulum, as all men know, moves first in one direction (let us say, West) and then in another (let us say, East). Unlike the contrary movements of the tides, these two movements show no important or even interesting differences. No man, if he were blindfolded for a swing or two, and then confronted with the pendulum in motion, could say, "Ah, that is a Westward swing"—or an Eastward.

In short, the swing of the pendulum has much less title to "character" than the turn of the tide. None would suppose so who read the words of the Special Correspondent on the Libya Front. Let us, by the way, give him full marks for writing, and dispatching, any words at all; and let us make due allowance for any words composed in such a place. But, having said that, let us survey the words again.

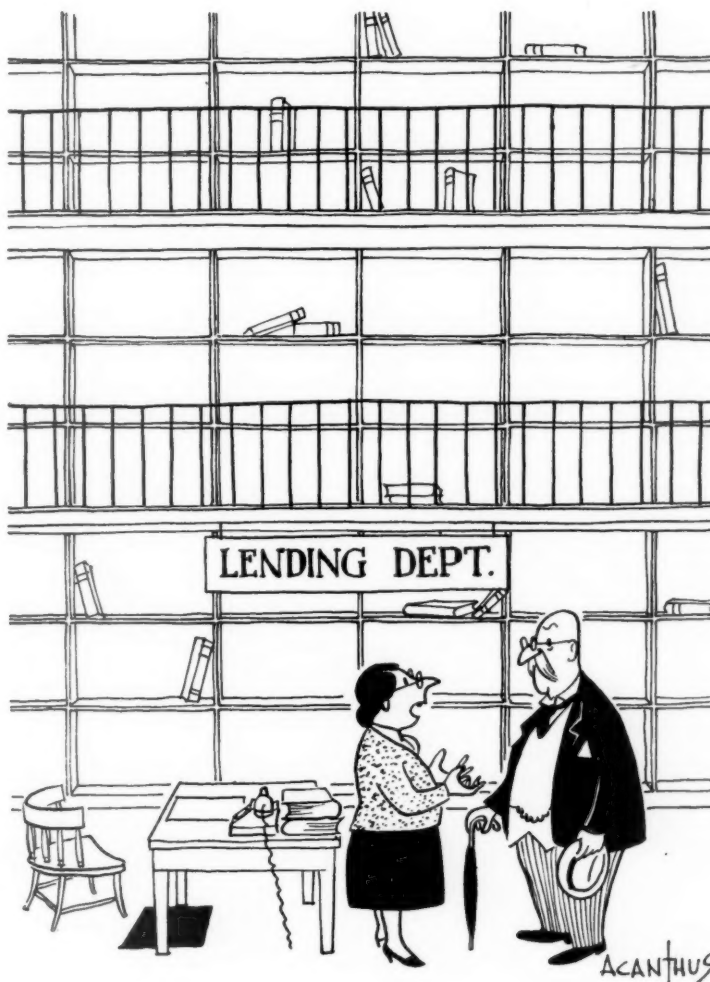
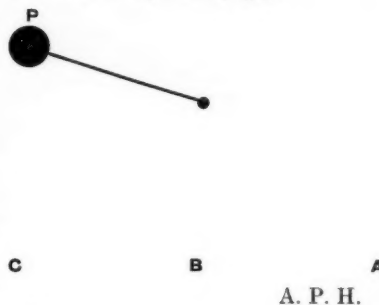
*"Our commanders . . . are convinced that the next swing of the pendulum will go in our favour, and the swing will be deeper."*

Let us consider this Pendulum. It is swinging—that is a part of its nature—it is not stationary. That is to say, the lower end of it passes from a point A in the East to a point C in the West, over a point B between them. Then it passes from the point C to the point A. There is, of course, just a chance that one day it may stop swinging, passing, or missing, and come to rest. In which case the end of it will hang, or pend, motionless over the point B. And everyone will be flung into a justifiable flop. Perhaps for years.

But at the moment it is swinging. That is, it has just completed one good honest swing. It has swung from C to A. But why should we worry? For, being a pendulum, it will surely swing back to C again *at once*. That is the way pendula behave. And this new swing will be "favourable" to us. Now, in what way will it be "favourable"? It will not look better, it will not last longer than the swing before. And it will be followed immediately by a third swing similar in everything except direction. Or will it? We begin to perceive that the Special Correspondent is not quite so dull as we thought. He has something new and original in his mind. *This swing is not going to be like the swing that preceded it, nor is it going to have any successor.* This

time, when the pendulum-end P is over the point C it is going to stop there. This is a swing to end swings. We wish we had space for a diagram or two showing the pendulum passing from a condition of endless movement to a condition of triumphant staticity at an angle of about 45 degrees. No, not 45. Even now we are not doing justice to the writer. This swing is going to be "deeper" than the one before. How deep? you ask in your foolish way. Well, it is hard to say. There are two ways in which the swing might achieve greater depth. One, the pendulum unobtrusively becomes longer so that it swings out further and comes to rest with its end over a point beyond—that is, to the west of—C. Or, two, while retaining its original length, the

pendulum might swing *higher* than before, coming to rest at an angle, shall we say, of 107°—or North 73° West. It is true that the extremity P may end up slightly to the *East* of the point C: but you must admit that it will look exceptionally gay.



*"Personally, I suspect that National Waste Paper Contest."*



## Industrial Relations

### VII

THE reader will forgive me, I hope, if I begin on a serious note. I am dealing with a subject so complicated, so crammed with erudition and so utterly uninteresting that I feel I have no right to expect a following through the labyrinthine corridors of my mind unless I resurrect the signposts. Very well then. This is an age of monsters. Leviathans plough the oceans; gigantic factories disgorge their teeming millions. Even trout are reported to be doing well—but I am dealing primarily with factories. Have they reached the limit of their growth? In every age there are men who say (with Dioclitivus), "Enough—this is the true summit of human achievement. From now on—nothing is new." Yet Dioclitivus and his watering-can are almost forgotten. It was the same with Mrs. Harriet Boddy and her thumb-screws, with Potiphar Cheam and his patent oboe-cleaner, with Kay and his flying-shuttle and with George Eliot and her set.

Technically, I suppose, it is possible to construct a liner to reach from New York to Southampton or a train to extend from London to Edinburgh, but such contraptions would defeat their own purpose. Similarly the engineers *could* give us larger cricket bats, telephone kiosks and factories. That they do not is due to the managerial difficulties inherent in all large-scale activities. It is foolish, therefore, to regard our present problems only from the viewpoint of the technician or operative. Administration and clerical routine play a vital rôle in our war effort. In publishing this selection of documents from the Suggestions Box of the Snacker and

Diplocket Small Things Co. (1928) Ltd., I am revealing for the first time that everything is not well with the British costing clerk.

Mr. Lambert Wharfinger writes: "On behalf of my colleagues in the Accounts Department I wish to complain against the unequal treatment of manual and clerical workers in this factory. Quite apart from the fact that our rates of remuneration are markedly inferior to those of cleaners and canteen assistants, we are subjected to a form of discrimination which daily becomes more oppressive. The operatives enjoy excellent music while they work: we have to put up with the cacophonous medley produced by Miss Springe's version of 'How Green Was My Valley' and the boy's sibilant repetition of 'The Sailor With the Navy Blue Eyes.' The workers breathe air which is pre-heated and filtered: we must foul our lungs with a substance laden with carbon-monoxide (from the coke-stove), Miss Springe's face-powder ('Evening in Runcorn') and the boy's aromatic mixture of shag. The workers are equipped with tools that are models of accuracy and efficiency: our request for a new rubber has been ridiculed, and only by resorting to well-timed raids on the post office can we provide ourselves with pens and ink. Now, all this is not good enough. The clerks of the works are united. Unless they are afforded reasonable treatment the pen-pushers will stop pushing and then where will you be?"

"The under-manager, Mr. Craven, threatens to dismiss me for what he calls downright idleness," writes Miss Elspeth Chubb, "but I know that if I can only explain my dilemma everything can be straightened out satisfactorily. My typewriter has a bell which rings when I get to the end of a line. It makes a sweet note reminiscent of the delicious tintinnabulations

produced by the cow-bells of the Bernese Oberland. At the end of each line, therefore, I fall into a deep reverie when I live over again the golden hours of my Chef's Conducted Tour of 1937. It should be an easy matter to substitute a klaxon or something for the bell, but I should be very grateful to receive the latter as a memento."

The next note is a satirical reminder of the new attitude towards petty officialdom. It is anonymous and reads: "To reach Promotion quickly—take the Underhand route and follow the red tape."

"Although the firm is now under Government control," writes Mr. Charles Diplocket, "I believe I am still its titular chief. That being so I should welcome duties more commensurate with my position. When I remonstrated recently with the adding-machine girls for their criticism of my tea-brewing methods I was told to: 'Pipe down, brother. Times are not what they were.' I should be grateful for a transfer to the Costs Office, where I understand the taste for tea is less epicurean."

"I am a warm admirer of our Russian Allies and I appreciate their gallantry," writes Mr. Osbert Sonnet, "but I am also a member of the Primrose League. During the past few weeks the hostility of the 'redder' workers has become open and bitter. Yesterday, for example, being payday, a constant stream of abuse was directed at me through the guichet-window. I regret having to take this line of action but I feel I must report Mechanics 05289 and 7224 to the management. The former used the phrase 'ruddy Threadneedle Street profiteer' and the latter described me as a 'black-coated parasite,' a term as inaccurate as it was malicious since I was wearing a drill golfing-jacket at the time."

Here ends Mr. Punch's Two



Hundred and Second Volume

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